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Preventing Injuries in Military Training

As a service member, you can push yourself hard to reach your peak fitness goals. However, ramping up your workout too much could lead to injuries that can affect your daily performance. You can reduce your risk of injury by being informed. Here are a few tips that can help you minimize the risk of injuries while training.

Take the right steps for injury prevention

Make sure your aim for better health doesn't end up damaging important tissues and muscles. Follow these guidelines to help you reach your peak fitness goals while avoiding injury from overtraining.

- **Ask your doctor about your exercise regimen** to make sure you're healthy enough to participate in your chosen program.
- **Slow down.** Overtraining can lead to issues including strained muscles, torn ligaments, stress fractures and other problems that can affect your job performance.
- **Start small.** Gradually increase the exercise intensity and duration to let your body adjust to the challenge at a safe pace.
- **Warm up.** Take a short walk or jog; stretch your muscles after your warm-up.
- **Make rest mandatory.** Increase the rest between intervals when you start a new program. Plan days of reduced or no conditioning to give your body a chance to recover.
- **Eat a balanced diet** with plenty of carbohydrates, proteins and essential nutrients.
- **Watch for symptoms of overtraining,** like fatigue or muscle soreness beyond the next-day soreness, and adjust your training accordingly.
- **Drink plenty of water before, during and after training.** Drink slowly to prevent cramping and nausea, and drink sports drinks when possible to replace salts lost to sweating.
- **Keep your gear in good condition.** Don't wear broken gear or equipment that doesn't fit, as they can make training more difficult and cause injury.
- **Wear properly fitted shoes.** Good shoes that provide support are especially important.

Watch for symptoms of overuse injuries

Many training injuries are caused by the overuse of certain tissues. Learn to recognize the symptoms before they become severe, such as:

- **Achilles tendonitis:** inflammation of the tissue that connects the heel to the calf muscles of the lower leg
- **Runner's knee:** swelling and pain when the kneecap rubs against the end of the thighbone
- **Plantar fasciitis:** inflammation of the tissue in the sole of the foot.
- **Stress fractures:** small cracks in the bones from repeated impact.

You can help prevent or avoid overuse injuries by doing exercises, such as:

- **Repeating toe raises** to strengthen your calf muscles
- **Running on soft or even surfaces**
- **Eating a healthy diet and lose excess weight**
- **Avoiding exercises that require a bent knee position** for a long time.

You can still achieve your fitness goals and take the right steps to prevent military training injuries. Know your capabilities, be informed and protect your health in a way that allows you to do your important job.

A Military OneSource **Health and Wellness coach** can help you set goals and a good plan for reaching them. Coaching is at no cost, and you can work with a coach by phone, chat or video — secure and online. Call 800-342-9647 to sign up. OCONUS/International? [Click here for calling options.](#)

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